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70 Pct Of Asylum Seekers, Refugees Suffer Symptoms Of Mental Illness - NGO



Foreign workers inundating the Immigration Department during the Foreign Workers Biometric Registration Programme which ends July 31. The authorities would first register legal foreign workers by updating the biometric database and later start registering at least two million illegal foreign workers, before letting them leave the country under an amnesty scheme. *Pic: Syed Muhammad Zahid* KUALA LUMPUR, July 26 (Bernama)

Seventy per cent of men and women asylum seekers and refugees in Malaysia suffer symptoms of anxiety, depression and stress due to human trafficking, forced labour and unemployment, according to a non-governmental organisation.

The figure was three times higher than in any normal population, said the Dr Xavier Pereira, the director of Health Equity and Initiatives (HEI).

He said the finding was based on a study done in March on 1,074 asylum seekers and refugees, aged between 18 to 70 years.

"Both men and women are equally affected, especially those who are unemployed, involved in human trafficking and forced labour," he told reporters after the National Consultation of the Health Dimensions of Human Trafficking and Forced Labour, here today.

He said that the study also showed that extreme symptoms of anxiety was more evident than both depression and stress.

He added that the level of anxiety among asylum seekers were higher than the refugees.

-- BERNAMA